

ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

STUDIES IN THE LIFE HISTORY OF THE SONG SPARROW. I. A POPULATION STUDY OF THE SONG SPARROW. By Margaret Morse Nice. Trans. Linn. Soc. N. Y., IV, April, 1937. Pp. i-vi+1-247. Pls. I-III. Charts I-XVIII. Maps 1-14. Tables I-XXXIII. Price, \$1.50.

This is Volume I of a monograph based on eight years (1928-1936) of intensive study of *Melospiza melodia*, mostly on an area of about forty acres of Olentangy River flood plain adjacent to the author's former home at Columbus, Ohio. Its scope ranges from statistical presentation of breeding data to critical evaluation of population theory and includes significant discussions of such phases of life history as migration, territorialism, and ecological relationships. Volume II, it is indicated, will be devoted more to details of Song Sparrow behavior, with special regard to activities associated with reproduction.

The principal research technique used was that of field observation, supplemented by color banding. Little experimentation, and no collecting, was done, as it was desired to determine as accurately as possible "What actually happens in a population of wild birds."

One is impressed by the tremendous amount of data that Mrs. Nice has somehow found time to gather, practically through her own efforts alone. As might be expected of a person of her linguistic accomplishments, she has drawn from European, as well as American, ornithological literature. Of the non-English references in the 14-page bibliography, those having German and Dutch titles seem to have been most freely cited.

The subject matter, for all of its bulk and intrinsic complexity, has been clearly handled. Mrs. Nice has expressed the hope that the Song Sparrow work might stimulate further study, and it should do just that. The chapter summaries and the eight pages of index should contribute to this end, but the chief strength of the writing, in my estimation, lies in its essential simplicity of diction, its solidity of background, the trends of thought it reveals, and the questions it raises. Not only has it been the author's evident intention to supply interested readers with the basic facts and up-to-date interpretation of those facts, but she has called attention to a great many of the important hiatuses that still exist in our knowledge of the life history and ecology of vertebrates.—PAUL L. ERRINGTON.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE BIRDS OF WEST VIRGINIA. By Alexander Wetmore. Proceedings of the United States National Museum, Vol. 84, No. 3021. Washington, 1937. Pp. 401-441.

To those who are somewhat familiar with the State's avifauna Dr. Wetmore's paper will hold fewer surprises than to those who have not recognized West Virginia as an outstanding meeting place for many bird species and races. For local students, however, its value is apparent when one finds here listed the first race ever described whose type locality is in West Virginia; no less than nine races recorded from the State for the first time; and the first recorded specimens of at least one species. The present list treats 142 species and races.

Dr. Wetmore directed the Smithsonian Institution's investigation of West Virginia birds during the spring, summer, and autumn of 1936. The party's itinerary was so planned that nearly all major faunal divisions of the State were visited, the work extending from the Ohio River region in the southwestern portion of the